



NOAA NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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**Dolphin SMART® recognizes another Florida business dedicated to conservation
of dolphins in coastal waterways**

Coastal Kayak Charters in St. Pete Beach is Dolphin SMART

NOAA Fisheries and its partners welcome Coastal Kayak Charters to Dolphin SMART - a unique wild dolphin conservation program. Dolphin SMART recognizes to businesses that responsibly advertise and view wild dolphins and educate their patrons on dolphin conservation. Coastal Kayak Charters transports guests and kayaks by boat to explore Tampa Bay wildlife and ecosystems. Guests onboard responsibly view dolphins and other wildlife found in the local waterways.

"It is great to have another Dolphin SMART business in St. Pete Beach," said Grant Craig, NOAA Fisheries' Dolphin SMART coordinator for Florida's west coast. "More businesses are recognizing the conservation benefits of responsible viewing and helping to shift the paradigm of how to view dolphins in the wild to a way that does not harass or disturb the animals."

Viewing dolphins safely and responsibly, as well as advertising responsible viewing practices, is a cornerstone of the Dolphin SMART program. According to scientists, irresponsible viewing of wild dolphins may disrupt important behaviors causing negative impacts to the health of dolphins and their young. Visitors viewing dolphins with Dolphin SMART businesses enjoy a respectful tour that supports dolphin conservation while learning about dolphin biology and behavior.

"Coastal Kayak Charters is proud to be participating in Dolphin Smart," said Ross Heintzelman, co-owner of Coastal Kayak Charters, "This program helps to encourage sustainable tourism practices which provide long term benefits for tourists, tour operators, and most importantly, the marine mammals we share our local waters with."

There are now 18 recognized businesses in Florida and Hawaii in the steadily growing Dolphin SMART program. NOAA Fisheries encourages visitors to these areas to "look before you book" and support wild dolphin conservation by patronizing a Dolphin SMART business. Participating businesses display a Dolphin SMART flag and decal with the current calendar year. Participants are regularly evaluated to ensure they continue to voluntarily meet program standards. A list of Dolphin SMART businesses is available online at <http://www.dolphinSMART.org>.

The Dolphin SMART program was developed by NOAA's Fisheries and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Whale and Dolphin Conservation, and Dolphin Ecology Project. The acronym "SMART" is a reminder of the basic principles of dolphin viewing etiquette: helps

- **S**tay at least 50 yards from dolphins,
- **M**ove away slowly if the dolphins show signs of disturbance,
- **A**lways put your vessel engine in neutral when dolphins are near,
- **R**efrain from feeding, touching, or swimming with wild dolphins,
- **T**each others to be Dolphin SMART.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.

On the web:

Dolphin SMART: www.dolphinSMART.org

NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office:

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/mm/dolphins/bdconservation.htm>

NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society: www.wdcs-na.org

Dolphin Ecology Project: <http://www.dolphinecology.org>

Don't Feed Wild Dolphins: www.dontfeedwilddolphins.org

Ross Heintzelman, co-owner, Coastal Kayak Charters, photo credit: NOAA

